

**W**ell, autumn is almost here in the Great White [not yet] North, and with it, our autumn edition of the *Canadian Military Journal*.

This time out, Colonel John Alexander, a very experienced tactical aviation and special operations pilot, takes the point with an assessment of Canada's recent spending commitment to national defence made at the 2014 NATO Summit held in Wales, and what the effect of this commitment will have upon Canada's specific NATO commitment. While Alexander believes that while Canada is unlikely to achieve the promised targets, he also maintains that the failure to do so "... does not reflect a reduction in Canada's commitment to NATO, either politically or financially."

Next, a highly experienced soldier who has seen service in three national armies and two wars tackles a very timely subject, that of future military recruitment. Tom St. Denis opines that there are issues currently developing as trends that raise such an acute military personnel problem for recruitment that they threaten to undermine both national and global security. "Five stand out as potentially the most deleterious: ageing and shrinking populations; increasing obesity and lack of fitness among youth; disinclination for military service; rising defence costs; and the influence of technology." St. Denis also asserts that these developing trends are "... shared more-or-less equally by all advanced societies."

Suicides have become a very significant issue in the Canadian military in recent years, and historians Matthew Barrett and Allan English remind us that there have been more deaths by suicides in the Canadian Armed Forces since 2002 than mission deaths in the twelve years Canada was engaged in the war in Afghanistan. However, the authors maintain that this is not a new concern, and that over the years, a number of cases "... have come to public attention, especially those *during or immediately after* a major conflict in which Canada has been involved." They use two case studies, one centering on the immediate aftermath of the First World War, and a more contemporary one from the Afghanistan conflict to help assess how public attitudes towards mental stress injuries and suicides involving Canadian servicepersons changed during the course of each conflict. Barrett and English then "... assess how destigmatization efforts might be improved by using historical evidence, and how this knowledge could be leveraged to help facilitate a more productive and open dialogue about mental health and suicide in the military."

Although at the time of writing, no decision has been made as to what Canada's next generation fighter aircraft will be, defence analyst Richard Shimooka believes that an examination of the Canadian Air Force's historical transition to the CF-18 *Hornet*

in the early-1980s is warranted, "... in order to understand some of the potential weaknesses that surfaced, and to provide some consideration for Canada's future transition towards a next generation fighter."

In a similar fashion, in terms of lessons to be learned from the past, Lieutenant-Commander Jeff Dargavel, a very experienced sailor, offers an interesting comparison between the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard unified maritime strategy, as published in their *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, and Emperor Augustus Caesar's strategic aim to provide security for the Roman Empire without undermining the Empire's economic base or compromising its hegemonic political order. Dargavel asserts "... that Julio-Claudian emperors [31 B.C. – 68 A.D.] employed seapower to protect and maintain their empire in the same fashion that the U.S. uses seapower today to maintain its hegemony and position as the world's superpower."

We then move on to our two opinion pieces, which, once again, are very diverse in their subject matter. First, combat engineering officer Major Anthony Robb offers a very candid assessment of the need for a critical healthy exchange of negative feedback in the Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System (CFPAS). Robb suggests that while the relatively-recent After Action Review (AAR) process with tenets of continual learning and collective growth through a 'no thin skins' approach has permitted a more honest exchange of feedback at the *macro*-level, "... a refreshed approach is needed at the *individual* level." Next, in response to Major Mike Draho's comments with respect to the Canadian Armed Forces' proposed FORCE Incentive Program in the last issue on incentivised fitness, Dr. Mike Spivock, a Senior Officer—Human Performance Research within the CAF Directorate of Fitness, suggests that Major Draho's opinions "... appear to be based upon some inaccurate interpretations of the facts." To that end, while grateful to Major Draho for raising the issue, Dr. Spivock provides some elaborative background on this complex and important initiative.

Then, our own resident commentator Martin Shadwick takes a look at some *historical* prescriptions for Canada's defence needs, and compares them to *recent* contributions to the process of determining those needs.

Finally, we close with a quartet of book reviews that hopefully will be of interest to our readership.

Until the next time.

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